



Frequently Asked Questions on EVAAS

Frequently Asked Questions: Summer 2013

1. Where can I find more information about how the EVAAS models work?

Users with EVAAS accounts have access to HelpFiles, which explain how to interpret and use the various reports available in the system. Additionally, users can access virtual learning modules by clicking on the “e-Learning” button in the top-right corner of the screen when they are logged into EVAAS. These learning modules are short videos that demonstrate how to access, interpret, and use different reports in the system.

For more general information about value-added modeling, a good resource is the Carnegie Knowledge Network and its [many reports](#). The Council of Chief State School Officers has published [A Practitioner's Guide to Growth Models](#).

2. I want to know about the statistical models behind EVAAS. Where can I find out more?

For more technical information, access [SAS EVAAS Statistical Models](#), which details the general statistical approaches to the EVAAS models. The RAND Corporation has also published a [number of reports](#) that explore the EVAAS modeling approaches, as well as other statistical models for measuring the growth of students.

3. North Carolina is using EVAAS measures of student growth in educator evaluation. What is the research behind doing this?

The North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction believe that student growth is one critical piece of an educator's effectiveness. The National Bureau of Economic Research has established the relationship between a teacher's value-added score and his or her students' future outcomes in adulthood in [The Long Term Impact of Teachers: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood](#).

[*The Brookings Institute's Evaluating Teachers: The Important Role of Value-Added*](#) acknowledges the limitations of value-added modeling but puts the limitations in context and considers it part of a thorough evaluation system for teachers.

The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project explore various methods through which teachers can receive specific, individualized feedback on their performance. Researchers associated with MET have published [numerous papers](#) on their findings.

4. EVAAS does not take into account that some of my students are from low-income backgrounds or members of a minority group. How is it fair that this information is left out of the model?

EVAAS uses each student as his or her own control when predicting a student's future academic gains. The system uses all of a student's prior test scores to predict how he or she will score on a future assessment.

The inclusion of, for example, socioeconomic status in the model would mean that, philosophically, educators believe that it always affects a student's learning. Educators across North Carolina know that some students excel despite a lower socioeconomic status and do not want to lower expectations for all students from this background.

To learn more, review SAS EVAAS' [Adjusting for Student Characteristics in Value-Added Modeling](#).

5. Lots of districts in North Carolina are trying to get their effective teachers to move to different schools. Isn't this going to hurt these teachers' standard six ratings?

Researchers have found considerable evidence that teachers' ability to produce academic growth with students remains consistent, even as they move across schools. The National Center for Performance Incentives explored this question in [Do Teacher Effect Estimates Persist When Teachers Move to Schools with Different Socioeconomic Environments?](#) The National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Educational Research found similar results in [Portability of Teacher Effectiveness Across School Settings](#).

6. I've heard that no one has really looked at whether or not EVAAS' predictions of student performance have been verified and that no one has seen the actual model. Are these things true?

The SAS EVAAS team has debunked some of the common myths around EVAAS in this 2009 document: [Addressing Common Concerns About Value-Added Modeling](#).